NEWS FROM PROTECTED AREAS IN AFRICA

NAPA 178

Conserving nature in Africa



THIS MONTH IN THE NAPA

~~~

HEALTH AND NATURE, **INSEPARABLE?** 



# >>> P.2 - EDITO

The human race is currently facing an unprecedented challenge: preserving the natural world in which we were born in order to safeguard our own health...

## **P.3 - OUR ONLINE COURSES**

News on our online training courses, in particular the Online Certificate in PA Management, organised this month and in November...

# **YOUTH CONSERVATION**

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Teaching nature conservation via an online platform... it's useful, even in the bush!

#### P.6 TO 8 - HEALTH AND TOURISM ~~~

The 6 principles of sustainable and healthy tourism in protected and conserved areas and how to put them into practice...

# **FEATURE OF** THE MONTH

**MOOC AND** 

**ESSENTIALS** 









# HEALTH AND NATURE, INSEPARABLE?

Geoffroy MAUVAIS Papaco coordinator

>>> Our species, in its "Sapiens" form, appeared on Earth approximately 300,000 years ago. It has remarkably adapted to become the central element influencing the evolution of our environment, bringing us into the Anthropocene, which we have spoken about many times in the NAPA. We dominate nature, we divert rivers, we transform landscapes, we draw on and deplete resources... We even change the atmosphere and disrupt climate!

In doing so, we have forgotten that we are closely dependent on nature. Our species is now facing an unprecedented challenge: preserving the natural world in which we were born in order to preserve our own health.

Nature provides us with water, air and food of course, but also materials to shelter or dress, plants to heal, and enjoyable landscapes to assist with building up our weakening energy. Our entire essential needs depend on the natural cycles of sun and water, on the existence of plants, animals... in short, on life on Earth. We cannot live in good health without nature itself being healthy.

Diseases are therefore part of the equation. They evolve with us. Since the beginning of humanity, illness has accompanied humans and favoured the strongest individuals. This is the story of life on Earth. When our environment suffers, or when we are no longer adapted to it, diseases emerge.

Sometimes, humans are the only reservoir of the microbe, as with polio or measles. In this case, treatment and vaccination of humans can make the disease disappear. This is what happened to smallpox, the last case of which was recorded in Somalia in 1977.

# EDITO

Sometimes, the environment supports microbes, as for meningitis, parasitic disease or even cholera, which relates to the contamination of water and food by bacteria. To get rid of the disease, we must clean up the environment and secure drinkable water.

Finally, certain infections are linked to other animals, such as plague, flu, rabies, Ebola fever. They are numerous, more or less serious. Today, they represent the highest risk, as evidenced by the recent development of the COVID-19 coronavirus, the animal reservoir of which we have not yet identified. These infections are called zoonosis and represent 60% of current infectious diseases in humans. We cannot ensure human health without taking animal health into account,, and vice versa.



Overtourism and associated risks...

Today, humans roam all over the planet. Thus, billions of people become air travellers each year! This situation favours more than ever the emergence and spread of viruses and bacteria between humans, or between animals and Tourism has gradually become a humans. significant source of risk, and Protected and Conserved Areas (PCAs) offer а useful framework for working on "sustainable and healthy tourism" and thus define the best practices to support the "One Health" approach, which aims to balance the health of people, animals and ecosystems sustainably. This is NAPA's dossier of the month.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Find the PAPACO online <u>facebook/IUCNpapaco</u> <u>Groupe FB MOOC (English)</u> <u>@moocconservation (Instagram)</u> <u>@Papaco IUCN (X)</u> <u>Website of the Papaco</u>





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# **OUR ONLINE COURSES : MOOCS AND ESSENTIALS**

Join our online courses to learn more about nature conservation in PAs. All courses are free of charge, and you can obtain a certificate of completion if you pass the exams. You can also obtain an Online Certificate in Conservation of Protected Areas (issued by the Senghor University of Alexandria) by passing a supervised online exam (see dates here after).

#### Next exam dates:

18 October at 8:00 UTC and 16 November at 13:00 UTC. Apply: fill in the form here.

To take the exam, you must have completed (details of the conditions are available on mooc-conservation.org):

- the first 6 Papaco MOOCs (PAM, EM, LE, SP, VAL and TECH) and:
- one of the three IFDD MOOCs or the MOOC on Marine Protected Areas.

# **OUR MOOCS**

The current session of our MOOCs will end on the 31st of October. Next session: January 2024

The Essentials are always open. You can subscribe now!

# **OUR ESSENTIALS**



#### **MOOC PA management**

Goal: understand the essence and goals of protected areas. Through this MOOC, students will be able to grasp the importance of protected areas, their role and the different management aspects.



#### **MOOC Ecological monitoring** Goal: understand the different techniques used in protected areas to assess the impact of managment by monitoring the ecosystem.



**MOOC** Law enforcement Goal: understand the different legal contexts in Africa, their strengths and weaknesses as well as the techniques used to effectively enforce rules in parks.



#### **MOOC** Species conservation Goal: understand the techniques developed to conserve species in PAs, in situ and ex situ. The MOOC covers the main threats, as well as solutions that can help face these threats.



**MOOC** Valorisation of resources Goal: knowing how the valorisation of different protected area resources can take place, and understanding protected area valorisation through tourism.



Goal: knowing the context of new technologies applied to conservation, existing techniques, prerequisites for their implementation, their opportunities and limitations, their uses in the field...



**MOOC** Marine protected areas Goal: understanding as the design and creation of MPA networks, governance, ecological monitoring, but also surrounding economic activities, and how to include all this to MPA management.

**RANGER Essential** For protected area (PA) professionals who apply decisions and ensure the implementation of activities inside or around the PA.





**MANAGER** Essential

protected area professionals who need to plan, manage and assess the work carried out by field agents.



MANAGER LAW focuses on law enforcement and the valorisation of the PA and its natural resources.

MANAGER RESEARCH focuses on research activities, monitoring-evaluation and ecological monitoring.

**LEADER Essential** For managers working in central management of parks or large NGOs, they elaborate national and regional policies, they proceed to cross-sectoral



coordination and complex manage plans programmes. This course focuses on more general skills to enable a better understanding of the stakes of biodiversity conservation, all for better decision-making.

#### All our courses are available for free on

**MOOC-CONSERVATION.ORG** 





## October 2023

# YOUTH CONSERVATION: DISCOVER, UNDERSTAND AND ACT FOR THE PLANET

IUCN-Papaco has developed in November 2022 online and free of charge educational resources to discover, understand and act for the survival of the planet. The <u>youth-conservation.org</u> platform thus provides young people aged 10 to 17 and their trainers with permanent, unlimited and free resources allowing them to understand and expose in a simple way:

- 1. The concept of nature;
- 2. Why it is important;
- 3. What to do to preserve it.

The themes covered for the moment are: terrestrial biodiversity, marine biodiversity, climate change, threats to nature, the relationship between nature and our health and finally the future of nature conservation. Other subjects will gradually enrich this set.

The subjects are treated in several stages and interactively: at the start of each module, a video presents the theme and serves as an introduction then the user follows a logical progression to discover what we are talking about, understand what is happening and finally think how to act. Designed primarily for smartphones, the site is fun and easy to use for young people.



Papaco has not forgotten the trainers; thus the <u>youth-conservation.org</u> platform offers additional resources for trainers (teacher, parent, environment club manager, NGO, etc.) to help them lead discussions with young people. Thus, for each module, a poster summarizing the key lessons is offered (it can be downloaded and printed), as well as a detailed guide with useful resources to go further in the lessons and facilitate learning. The guides also clearly present ideas for actions in favor of preserving the environment that the trainer can implement with the young people he/she supervises on the theme in question.

# >>> OUR NEWS





- Tuesday September 19th 2023, 56 educators and trainers took the exam to obtain the Attestation of Aptitude for Environmental Education. 21 successfully obtained their attestation. Well done to them! A next examination session will take place in November 2023.
  - We organized a new webinar on Tuesday September 26, 2023 which brought together 20 participants. Co-hosted by our expert consultant Mr. Firmin Tape and by Amadou Bailo Balde from the Guinean NGO Education in Environment and Sustainable Development, this webinar generated very interesting exchanges around the subject of environmental education. Next webinar, Tuesday October 24, 2023 at 5 p.m. UTC/GMT.
- An activity guide for children and communities in rural areas has been posted online in the "Resources" section of the website <u>www.youth-conservation.org</u>. Designed to encourage action and thus put into practice the lessons of the 6 modules, this guide lists around fifteen simple activities to implement with young people, as well as the procedure to follow. To consult without delay and to share (*for now, only in French*)!
- **Podcasts:** to facilitate access and learning, we will translate all of our 6 modules in the form of audio episodes. It will thus be easier to consider translation into English but also ultimately into other local languages. *Scheduled for: January 2024*
- Online tutorial: like the online training courses on the https://mooc-conservation.org/ website, we aim to put a specific tutorial online on the subject of Environmental Education to meet the needs of of trainers and thus work towards capacity building. It will also be easier for us to assess teaching skills and issue certificates of Aptitude for Environmental Education. *Scheduled for: 1st quarter 2024*
- Translation of all of our 6 modules into English: with half of the African continent speaking English, it seems essential to us to have an English version of our modules! *Scheduled for: January* 2024



# HOW TO JOIN US?

- Do you want to participate in the dissemination and popularization of youth-conservation.org and benefit in return from the network and visibility of IUCN-Papaco? Please contact us at info@youth-conservation.org with a short presentation of your project (school, club, NGO, etc.).
- A question? A comment? Contact us: info@youth-conservation.org or FB private group: click here.
- If you are interested in receiving our quarterly newsletter please subscribe here.





October 2023

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN THE BUSH

## >>>> BY HANS MAK

MOOC AMABASSADOR IN CONGO

#### Section 2015 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

Environmental education contributes to a better understanding of environmental, social, economic, cultural and ethical interdependencies, and helps learners make co-responsible decisions and act accordingly. It encourages skills that enable us to understand the limits of the natural foundations of life and, as an integral part of a community, to help shape the natural environment and society in a forward-looking, supportive and responsible way.

In Africa, its understanding far from all pretexts, its challenges and its impact depend on the target (public, subject and tools), the effectiveness of the communication strategies to be developed, and the associated development interests. Indeed, the perception that a people and/or a community has regarding sensitivity to development and the value of the heritage to be protected will determine the future of the challenges to be faced. In the Republic of Congo, environmental awareness has always been considered a strategic activity to bring different segments of the population back to the protection of biodiversity and protected areas, but the bet is far from won, because the programs proposed, the tools and communication strategies of the state, do not often take into account certain aspects to the point of generating global changes, because they are often attached to political aspirations aimed at satisfying one party under the extrapolated lights of the media to the surprise of other parties more concerned.

## FIELD EXPERIENCE AND RECEPTIVITY OF CHILDREN

The efforts are however observed by certain actors on the ground, we can cite the case of the RENATURA association with activities around marine turtles, or the case of the ESI-Congo association for the protection of great apes, which has since supported for some time now the project to create the Ntombo protected area. Among the crucial roles to play, ESI-Congo, through the interventions of its experts, prepares communities for the realities of the term "protected area" and helps improve their perceptions of the associated issues.



For then, the communication strategies and the approach developed, used by ESI-Congo, combined with the expertise of its agents had made it possible during our field trips, to immerse the children and young people in a profound discovery, sparking curiosity and interaction to understand essential terms on biodiversity and conservation. At the same time, we felt the lack of resources and the desire to have more of this type of experience, whether for the children or the teachers, but also the satisfaction of the parents present.

#### >>>> THE NEED FOR TARGET TO REMODEL ACTION IN THE BUSH

Our eyes must be oriented towards everyday life to think "future", because every day reminds us of the importance of biodiversity for the health of our planet and for development, and we cannot ignore the indigenous peoples, holders of precursor knowledge of nature conservation with cultural-traditional methods. We therefore need to redefine contexts to promote African culture and raise children's awareness of environmental protection and the SDGs.



#### **FROM COMMITMENT TO IMPACT**

The evidence is that ignorance among children in the bush is a barrier to access to education in general. Political commitment alone gives us the impression of existing in a single country, two worlds: that of people who are informed and taught with technological developments, but whose behavior tends increasingly towards irresponsible practices, and a world lacking a certain level of modern information and training, but whose basis and key to human survival depends on it.

Awareness tools must be practical and directly affect each theme; interest in the equitable sharing of natural resources and social development must be visible and concrete rather than apparent; communities must be considered as stakeholders in conservation and not as a simple figure on the map..., in short, a harmonious model taking into account national programs, educational tools, the expertise and training of educators, strategies of communication and community development, to interest rural youth is more than necessary in order to correct the trend and succeed in awareness-raising and environmental education activities.

Youth Conservation, an IUCN program to support environmental education for young people, offers some interesting educational tools, and sets up a support platform for teachers. Several other organizations (NGOs, civil society organizations, etc.) are trying to meet the challenges, but there are many constraints to reach the estimated level in Africa. However, we are moving forward and we can draw inspiration from it to redefine a new, more coalitional model.

#### >>>> YOUTH IN ACTION TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

The coordination in the Republic of Congo of the global youth network for biodiversity under the acronym RCYBN (Republic of Congo Youth Biodiversity Network) has the vision of "building a coalition of Congolese youth to fight against the loss of humaninduced biodiversity, by mobilizing, involving and empowering young people, while raising their awareness of the importance of biodiversity". It includes in its projects the education of rural youth with palpable tools to grasp the consciousness and perception of a good number of children and strengthen the educational system of schools. This avenue to explore is necessary for coalitive model mentioned previously.







**DOSSIER OF THE** 

## <u>Guide on One Health principles for sustainable tourism</u> <u>in protected and conserved areas</u>

Accompanying principles to the guidelines for prevention, detection, response and recovery from disease risks in and around protected and conserved areas

#### >>> Quick overview of the guide

The wide-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have included immense loss of life and serious health and economic consequences across communities and ecosystems. One key message made clear from the pandemic crisis has been that sustainability must be a leading priority across all sectors to ensure a healthy and safe future. Tourism, which itself suffered a sharp disruption in the pandemic, is among the industries that have a strong interest to reduce risks and increase resilience toward a more sustainable model in line with a One Health approach. Protected and conserved areas are an especially important setting for (PCAs) sustainable tourism and can serve as a catalyst for wider adoption of best practices anchored in One Health principles that help to sustainability balance the health of people, animals, and ecosystems.

The One Health principles for sustainable tourism in protected and conserved areas present six core principles, which have been developed and refined through a series of workshops and expert consultations. They provide practical strategies for tour operators and wider tourism industry stakeholders in PCAs. They are intentionally broad, allowing for use and adaptation in any PCA context. They complement the wider Healthy people and wildlife through nature protection: Guidelines for prevention, detection, response and recovery from disease risks in and around protected and conserved areas, shining a focused look at tourism in PCAs and taking stock of lessons learned from PCAs and the tourism sector from recent disease events. The principles are as follows:

1. Promote and protect the health of humans and other species

2. Proactively manage health threats in ways that minimize degradation of ecosystems or produce cobenefits for nature

3. Take into account context when designing or adapting disease risk reduction and resilience approaches

4. Empower visitors and tour operators to be good stewards of their health and the health of the local communities and ecosystems they visit

5. Ensure the equitable sharing of knowledge and benefits from tourism-based research and surveillance

6. Coordinate and collaborate across sectors to support prevention, detection, response, and recovery from disease threats.



Practical strategies and examples are reviewed under each principle, followed by application to different sustainable tourism contexts: national parks, small-scale community-based tourism, or private enterprises. An illustrative list provides guidance on overarching, sitespecific, and tourism industry and tourist-directed approaches, where One Health approaches can improve assessment and outcomes, among them in: site selection; setting the carrying capacity for visitors; ensuring investments promote diversified sources of income generation to support resilience; maintaining communication channels between tourism, human and animal health, and environment authorities to promote timely and efficient information flow and consistent messaging; developing visitor code of conduct and encouraging pre-travel medical consultations; providing employee health and safety programmes; and making sustainable forms of tourism the standard in PCAs.

Together, the principles convey that considering tradeoffs for environment and health need not come at the expense of tourism activities and livelihoods; rather, a One Health approach can provide practical strategies and help balance multiple objectives across sectors to achieve optimal outcomes.

Applying the One Health principles in a sustainable tourism context in protected and conserved areas Tourism in PCAs can look quite different based on several factors, including the specific purpose, region, ecosystem, infrastructure, governance structure, regulatory oversight, and available resources. In this section, three tourism contexts are used to illustrate how the above principles can be applied, highlighting specific One Health considerations relevant to each context. These contexts may overlap in practice and are not exhaustive.

They are intended as a starting point; it is anticipated that application of the One Health principles will identify other important health-related issues as well as solutions.



#### National or sub-national parks

Depending on protected status designation, tourism activities are common in some types of PCAs, including national or sub-national parks or other protected areas under government oversight. These sites may be in rural or urban settings. The extent of park management presence may vary widely, along with infrastructure, capacity, and operating budgets for monitoring and enforcement. Private enterprises may be common (for example, in the running of hotels, restaurants, concession stands, trinket shops, or excursions – as discussed further below).

Tourist visits may be entirely guided or completely independent, or a mix of the two.

For a given park or protected area landscape, a helpful starting point may be to conduct an interface assessment to identify the potential practices or locations where wildlife-human and vector-human exposures occur in a way that presents disease risk. Depending on diseases circulating in the region, similar assessments may need to be conducted for other types of exposures: domestic animal-human, domestic animalhuman-human transmission. wildlife. and The significance of these interfaces may be dynamic; for example, an active outbreak of rabies virus in domestic dogs could pose a threat to wild canids and humans. Depending on the site and structure of tourism activities, interventions can then be developed to reduce risk. For example, if tourists are permitted to camp across a large terrain, closing off access to some sections or stationing park staff at select "critical control points" where risk is highest may be pragmatic ways to intervene. A centrally located entrance may help to ensure all tourists receive standard information that can assist in risk reduction.

For sites assessing a user fee, a portion could be allocated to health promotion and health protection, for example, to provide potable drinking water, toilets and waste management services, risk communication signage, and disease surveillance and wildlife mortality monitoring activities. Another important aspect requiring resourcing is occupational health and safety, such as providing education on risk reduction for tour operators and purchasing personal protective equipment for staff handling wild animals.



Rangers, researchers, and tourists alike may already contribute to biodiversity monitoring in PCA sites. In addition to this valuable information for conservation, observations may be important for wildlife health monitoring.

Even for relatively well-staffed parks, ranger patrols may not always have existing capacity or resources for reporting of all wildlife mortality events. For this reason, tourists can potentially play a valuable role in citizen science for reporting of disease observations in wildlife. However, these should be limited to visual/photographic observations to ensure visitor safety, and should be reported to appropriate park authorities, who can notify veterinarians or other qualified staff to conduct a disease investigation if warranted. Because of the potential public health implications, PCAs serving visitors should have this reporting channel in line with a One Health approach as a minimum standard for their health and safety efforts. Additional information on contributions from PCAs to disease risk reduction can be found in the accompanying Guidelines for prevention, detection, response and recovery from disease risks in protected and conserved areas.

In general, the above considerations will also apply to the following two contexts.

#### Small-scale or community-led

Within or around PCAs, small-scale or community-led tourism operations may be common and may contribute importantly to income generation. These are often marketed as authentic experiences, sometimes involving homestays that put visitors and local populations into close contact. Thus, the potential for human-human disease transmission may be heightened. Limiting close contact can help reduce disease risk during active epidemics.

Activities involving multiple people gathering in close spaces should occur in open-air settings.

In many ways, these tourism experiences can convey a sense of community stewardship, gaining inspiration from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and their ways of living. In this way, they have many possible benefits, and may help to minimize pressures on PCAs in terms of utilizing existing infrastructure and land versus building new housing and infrastructure.





However, some communities live in close proximity to wildlife, including through hunting, butchering, consumption, and other uses of wild animals. Without acquired immunity to circulating pathogens, tourists may be particularly susceptible to infection. For this reason, and for the health and welfare of animals, it is advised that tourists not directly handle or consume animals that present elevated risk for emerging infectious diseases, particularly species of bats, rodents, and non-human primates. Wildlife selfies are an example of such practices that can endanger both visitors and individual animals.

Some tourism experiences may be located in remote areas where access to modern healthcare services may be limited or days away by boat, poor road conditions, or infrequent flights or trains. This reinforces the importance of preventive measures to avoid injury or illness. For example, in the era of COVID-19, viral testing is advisable before travel to remote sites.

One important context factor is that individual tour operators or communities may not always have a sense of the norms and laws that their visitors are used to. Social and cultural factors (e.g. concerns about being impolite) or economic determinants (e.g. reliance for income) may mean that workers are not empowered to promote healthy and sustainable tourism. This can present potential challenges for the enforcement of good practices, particularly if visitors demand practices that may be detrimental to the health of humans, animals, or the environment. In this case, it is important to set tourist expectations in advance, including through a code of conduct, and ideally reinforce it through broader system changes that reduce enforcement demands on individual operators.

#### Large-scale private enterprises

Within national or sub-national parks, large private enterprises, such as game reserves, lodges, rescue centers, or zoos, may serve tourists via direct bookings or via independent tour guides that bring a group. These may operate under a public-private partnership mechanism (such as a fixed contract for services or a concession with a commercial entity, or a non-profit run rescue center), with the specific terms potentially affecting regulatory oversight. Practices affecting human, animal and environmental health should be examined under these arrangements to ensure appropriate safeguards are implemented. Behavioural nudges, such as setting standard practices as a condition of entry (for example, universal masking or use of foot baths for disinfection of footwear) may encourage compliance.



Privately-owned or managed wilderness areas are typically still connected to surrounding habitat that allows for ongoing movement of animals in and out of a specified boundary, which could potentially facilitate introduction of disease..

Trade of animal stock can also be a source of disease introduction. For this reason, private owners can benefit from being aware of disease risk from season to season and stay alert to reported outbreaks in the surrounding area. This can guide risk reduction measures related to activities that may involve close contact with animals, as hunting, food preparation, taxidermy, such confiscations, and other handling practices such as wildlife selfies and feeding of animals in zoo/sanctuary settings. Protected area managers should be aware of the importance of this interface and incorporate relevant considerations into outreach materials, protocols, and participatory stakeholder mapping exercises and engagement of relevant actors.

Depending on the scale and type of tourism operations and the specific environmental conditions, natural resource use and emissions at sites may have adverse environmental effects, including on the availability of safe drinking water for local communities and the health of aquatic ecosystems and species.



A code of conduct for the PA visitors may help implement good behaviours in the park that is visited. Credit: C. Machalaba

Download the Guide





### October 2023

## NAPA 178

# **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

"How sad to think that nature speaks and mankind doesn't listen". *Victor Hugo* 

#### Brief: Human-wildlife conflict

>>> Wildlife can threaten people's safety and livelihoods, which can lead to conflicts between groups of people over how to resolve the situation; experts call this 'human-wildlife conflict'.

Human-wildlife conflicts are becoming more frequent, serious and widespread as human populations grow and habitats are lost.

Effectively managing human-wildlife conflicts protects communities, stops conflicts escalating, builds trust in conservation and avoids retaliation against wildlife.

Human-wildlife conflicts have unique ecological, cultural, social, historical, physical, economic and political characteristics which strategies to manage conflicts must consider.

## Find the PAPACO online facebook/IUCNpapaco Groupe FB MOOC (English) @moocconservation (Instagram) @Papaco\_IUCN (X) Website of the Papaco



#### Read more



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Consider publishing in the NAPA (article, stories, pictures on protected areas in Africa, job offers, etc.), contact us at moocs@papaco.org.

THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF IUCN



